

# THE LEISURE HOUR

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THE STRUGGLE IN THE STABLE-YARD.

## ROLAND LEIGH; OR, THE STORY OF A CITY ARAB.

CHAPTER XVIII.—I DREAM A DREAM.

It was not until I had emerged from the gloomy atmosphere, and escaped the faint, sickly, charnel-

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house effluvia of Whiskers' Rents, that I thought much of the danger to which I had exposed myself in my unavailing search for Peggy Magrath. Then, not only did fear lend wings to my flight, but imagination conjured up perhaps unreal ter-

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rors. I began to fancy myself already infected with the fatal fever, and felt a deadly sickness creeping over me. But, happily, it *was* fancy; and a draught of water from the nearest pump, and the crust of a penny loaf which I purchased, revived me.

But I felt disinclined to return immediately to my old haunts of industry; and, without any particular design beyond that of passing two or three vacant hours, I bent my steps towards, and turned into, the Park.

It was just about the time of day when people in the fashionable world were beginning to show signs of life; and I lay down on the dusty grass within sight of one of the drives, and watched the various equipages as they passed rapidly by. I think I am not sorry in saying that these were among the bitterest hours I had ever experienced. I had, as my readers know, had some acquaintance with suffering and sorrow; had felt hunger and cold, and physical pain in other forms; had been destitute and friendless; but all this I had borne with a sort of stolid indifference, compared with the anguish of mind I endured as I saw around me so much that seemed to be calculated to make life happy and joyous, and felt how wide was the gulf between the gay and fluttering throng and myself. I did not know then, what I have since learned, and know now, that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth;" and I should scarcely have comprehended the fact, had I then been told that beneath the rich clothing of the occupants of those luxurious carriages, and the gay exterior and bearing of the riders on those prancing, pampered horses, were some hearts brimful of wretchedness, hatred, malice, and every evil passion.

Alas! envy and hatred were gnawing at my heart then. My thoughts and aspirations were active, and becoming more and more matured; and how few had there been to guide them aright! I had just witnessed scenes of misery, too, from which almost all whom I was now envying would have shrunk with cowardice and horror—perhaps with scorn. I had just been disappointed also; and I felt, almost for the first time, that I was alone in the world, and desolate. If I had been killed outright by the violent fall from the horse which had only for a time disabled me—and I was wicked and desperate enough almost to wish that I *had* been killed—there would have been none to mourn for me; for who cared whether I lived or died? And if I had caught the fever at Whiskers' Rents—and likely enough I had—there would not be one to shed a tear for my loss.

In those dreary hours—strange that I had not experienced these sensations in the hospital, but I had not—in those dreary hours, with everything around me pleasant and soothing, if not inviting to the senses; and with the blue sky of an afternoon in summer over my head, scarcely obscured by a cloud of London smoke; and with a gentle breeze fanning my hot cheeks; oh! how indescribably wretched I was! In those dreary hours my past life and misfortunes forced themselves vividly into remembrance. The scene of my poor mother's death; her former sufferings and injuries; my grandfather's unnatural disownment of me; the severe and mistaken discipline to

which I had been subjected at the Sunday School; all these, with a thousand other troubles which had befallen me in my past short life, seemed to burn within me, and to gather round them a brood of harpies, stirring me up to deeds of desperation. Oh, if it were but in my power—only in my power!

At length, wearied in body and oppressed in mind, I closed my eyes, and sleep gradually came over me. I slept, and dreamt. I was far, far away, I knew not where. I had been in sore bodily conflict—was wounded, bruised, and faint; my tongue clave to my mouth for thirst, and I tried to cry out for help, but could not: then I sank insensible on to the rocky, parched ground.

I dreamt again, the same dream in continuance, and yet another: my head was pillowed on a soft lap, and when I looked up, my mother was bending over me with a benignant, blessed smile. Her lips moved softly, and I listened, but no audible words fell on my longing ear. But that smile was enough, and that happy, happy look of joy, and love, and peace.

But yet I thirsted, and the mute signs I made were understood. While I yet gazed on my mother's countenance, a gentle hand was placed beneath my head, quietly to raise it—just as my head had been raised by the hospital nurse; but I did not think of this then; and a cup was placed to my lips, but not by my mother. In the fitful changes of a dream my mother was gone, and the kind helper was little Fanny—Fanny, just as I remembered her when, two years or more before, she had pressed her purse upon me, and whispered words of hope and comfort in my ear. And she smiled on me, too, even as my mother had just smiled, while I took a deep draught from the cup she held to my lips. When I looked again she also had vanished, and my dream was broken.

I dreamt again, still the same dream in continuance, but yet another. I was on my feet, weak and struggling; the road was rough and rugged, and the sky was dark and lowering; before me was a gloomy forest, and on my right hand rolled a rough and turbid river. I stumbled, and should have fallen; but a strong arm caught and sustained me. I looked around, and could see no man; but I heard a voice, and I knew it as the voice of my poor old acquaintance and friend in the hospital. I recognised the words too; they were words which I had heard from the old patient's lips, but they sounded more majestically and sweetly: "'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God. Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.'"

A strange lightness and joy diffused itself over my mind at these words, and I listened eagerly for more; but no more came. Instead of this, the scene rapidly died away, and I awoke.

Reader, you may think as you please about my dream; it was a salutary one to me. And I would not ask you to believe that it was more than the busy working of my own disturbed mind, falling

back and weaving fancies from the memories of the past.

How long I had slept, I know not; I remember only that the dusk of evening had begun to overshadow the Park. Yet I did not stir from my position, but remained thinking, not so much of my dream as of my past life. But either my reflections had caught a pleasant and benign influence from the dream, or sleep had cheered my spirits, and banished for a time the despondency and evil passions which had previously disturbed my mind.

I had other thoughts now, and other than sad and desolate remembrances. I thought of my mother and her love, which shielded my early life from many troubles; of Peggy Magrath and her disinterested kindness; of Fanny, and her humble but earnest benevolence towards me, though herself enduring a lot harder than mine, and enduring it with the fortitude of a heroine. I thought, too, of what my old fellow-patient had said to me about God having taken care of me, and I could not deny that he had spoken the truth; and I thought of my good-natured, fat, and flourishing friend, the market-gardener, who had given me good advice and encouragement, and kindly help as well. I thought of his story, too—how he had raised himself, from poverty and destitution like mine, to comfort and even riches, by honesty and industry; and at this thought I started to my feet with new resolution and hope. I would not give up—no, I would not. I would go to him the next day, and ask his advice about laying out my little hoard of money to advantage, and—

And then the thought came into my mind that that little hoard ought to be looked after, and that it was time for me to be returning to my old sleeping-place in the stable-loft. The next day would be a new day. And with this thought I stepped briskly on, and soon left the Park behind me.

#### CHAPTER XIX.

##### AN UNTOWARD EVENT FRUSTRATES MY GOOD RESOLUTIONS.

THE dusk of evening had deepened into darkness in and around the stable-yard before I reached it, and I was very tired. Meeting with no one on the way to dispute my right to be there, I ascended to the loft, and was soon fast asleep in my old lair. I had no dreams this time, or, if I had, they would not be worth telling.

The early morning light awoke me, and I sprang from my bed of soft hay, ready to put into execution the designs I had formed on the previous day, and, as a preliminary to this, it was needful to take possession of my secret hoard. If I had had any misgivings about the security of the hiding-place, they were quickly dispelled—the money was safe; and as I cautiously counted it, and reckoned up how much I possessed, I trembled with excitement. I was no longer poor and destitute; I would not be long friendless and despised. Here was the germ of future wealth and respectability. The seed was small and insignificant; but if others had made shillings by trading with pence, and pounds—hundreds, thousands of pounds—by beginning to trade with shillings, why should not I?

I had counted it, then, and had put it into my

bosom—I would not trust it to my pockets—and was about to quit the loft in search of my friend the market-gardener—my foot, in fact, was on the top round of the ladder—when a heavy hand was laid on my shoulder, and a harsh voice shouted in my ear—

“None of them ‘ere tricks upon travellers, young fellow; you hand over my money, will you? you’ll find yourself in queer street else.”

Looking round in dismay, I found myself confronted by a hard-featured man, with a cunning aspect, whom I discovered, too late, had shared in the accommodation of the loft, and who doubtless, while I had been by the dim light counting my treasure, had been stealthily watching me from his concealment in the darkest corner. I may add, that, though the man seemed by his dress—a sort of stable-livery, rather faded and dirty—to be a groom or ostler, and might therefore be a hanger-on at the stables, I was altogether unacquainted with his person.

“Come, look sharp!” said the man. “You won’t, eh? then here goes;” and he made a sudden snatch at my concealed treasure. But I was on my guard, and, evading his attempt to rob me, I wrested myself from his grasp, and the next moment was in the stable-yard.

But I was not thus to elude his demand. The man descended from the loft as quickly almost as I had done, and, before I could escape, he had me again in his power. I was no match for my adversary in strength, but I defended my treasure with desperation, and the noise of our scuffle attracted to the door of one of the stables an old ostler, who was already employed in his daily occupations, and by whom, to my great relief, I was immediately recognised.

“Hallo, Roley, is it thou?” shouted he. “Hands off, Tom, will thee?”—this to the man, who had me on the ground, and was roughly searching my person for the little bag of money, which I was still bent on defending—“hands off, I say, or I’ll”—and, without finishing his threat, the ostler dragged away the man, whom he called Tom, before he had attained his purpose, and raised me up, panting with my efforts, and flushed with indignation.

“Now, then,” demanded the umpire, gravely, “let us know what all this is about. What dost want with the boy, Tom Smithers?”

“I don’t want anything with the boy?” said the man, sulkily; adding, with a cool audacity which nearly took away the little breath he had left me, through sheer astonishment, “but I mean to have the money the young rascal has robbed me of, or I’ll make him swing for it.”

“Robbed, eh? Hallo! Roley, take care what thee art about,” said my old acquaintance; “thee mustn’t be playing these tricks here. How was it, Smithers?”

“Just this here-a-way,” said my false accuser. “You know I goes to crib last night lateish, and the first thing I sees by the light of the lantern is this young varmint snuggled up in the hay. ‘Ullo!’ says I; but he doesn’t speak, and, thinks I, ‘Poor chap! I reckon he’s smuggled himself in here, but I won’t disturb him, I won’t; but I’ll take care of the money, howsoever;’ and so I lifts up a board, and runs my arm along as far as I

could get it, and "snug's" the word," says I. And then I goes off to sleep. Well, I doesn't sleep over sound—better luck for me, you'll say—and——"

"Cut it short, can't thee, Tom Smithers?" said the ostler impatiently. "Can't stand here all day."

"Short, eh?—short and sweet too, if you like. The long and short on it is, that this young rascal seed me put my money under the board, and up he gits this morning, when he thinks I's asleep, and tries to rob me of my little savings. One, five, four—one pound, five shillings, and fourpence 'tis. I counted it the last thing over-night, and he's got it about him now, the young thief."

If astonishment almost took away my breath before, it now struck me nearly dumb. The cunningly-devised tale, so rapidly extemporized, so credible, and yet so false! What could I say in reply, save what I knew would scarcely be believed—that the money was my own, honestly earned, and painfully and penuriously hoarded?

And then the unprincipled fellow must have caught from my lips the muttered sound of the amount of my little hoard, as I reckoned it up, and had introduced this into his tale as a proof positive of his ownership and my guilt.

It was a bold stroke of wickedness, certainly; for Smithers must have felt it possible that his story would be overturned; but the chances, he might have thought, would be in his favour, and at the worst he might pass off his charge as a joke.

As the reader may conclude, I did not make these reflections at the time. Before I had recovered from my momentary stupefaction, the old ostler's hand was on my arm, and he was rather roughly shaking me.

"What does thee say to this, lad?" he demanded, in somewhat of a Yorkshire dialect. "Doot thee know that this is a hanging matter, near upon? Coom, give the mon his pooch, and he'll let thee go. Roley," he added, scratching his head, "I didn't think thee to be a thief."

"I am not a thief," said I, for the first time finding my voice. "The money is all my own."

"Whew!" whistled the old ostler, "that won't go down, Roley. Coom, thee's a handy chap, and all that, and I don't want to see thee at t' cart's tail, and t' beadle behind; but give t' mon his bag o' money, and ha' done wo' it."

It was plain I should get little help or justice from my old acquaintance, who would never be brought to believe, on my unsupported word, that a ragged young London vagrant like myself could honestly have so much money at command; and, in short, I found myself in a fair (or foul) way of losing my precious hoard at one fell swoop. Only one resource seemed open to me, and I availed myself of it. Taking advantage of my accuser's apparent self-security, and trusting to my own agility, I darted between the two men, and, before they had recovered from the surprise, I had cleared the stable-yard, and was scouring along the street.

Now, no doubt this action of mine was an injudicious one; but perhaps, under somewhat similar circumstances, older and wiser people than I may have committed the same sort of blunder, and so have ripened unjust suspicion into apparent certainty, and given their enemy an advantage

over them, even as I did; for rapidly as my flight was executed, I soon found that both the man Smithers and the old ostler were not far behind me in full pursuit.

It was in vain that I attempted to outstrip them. Weakened by my recent accident and subsequent inertness in the hospital, my small modicum of strength was soon spent; my legs trembled beneath me, and my breath became short and laboured. Early morning as it was, too, the streets were not empty; and the cry of "Stop thief!" that was raised, started others in pursuit. Still, urged on by desperation, I continued running, until a foot was thrust out before me, and I fell with violence on to the pavement. In another minute I was in the hands of a watchman, just returning homeward from his beat, by whom I was conveyed to the nearest watch-house, where I was searched and the little bag of money was found upon me, as well as Fanny's purse and its hitherto sacred contents. I was, of course, deprived of these; and my accuser and his witness being ordered to appear at the police-office to support their charge against me, I was locked up to await the portentous examination.

I was not alone in the filthy strong-room in which I found myself. On a broad bench which extended around the blackened walls were several prisoners, some sitting and others stretched at full length, apparently sleeping off the effects of drunkenness. On the ground were others: all were waiting the summons to the magistrate's bar, and all exhibited signs of dissipation and debauchery which, if I had not, alas! been inured to such scenes at Whiskers' Rents and elsewhere, would have given me intense disgust.

"What have you been arter, young fellar?" demanded a man beside whom I seated myself in this place of little ease. I told him my story; and he burst out into a loud jeering laugh.

"That's a good un, that is," said he; "you'll get the 'Beak' to swallow that down o'coorse; and you won't dance in the air one of those fine mornings—oh no!"

"What's the matter?" growled another, raising himself on his elbow, and staring me in the face with drunken gravity.

My first questioner repeated my story with so lively an appreciation of its absurdity, and yet so correctly, that my ears tingled for very shame. I was spared, however, any additional comments on my story; for before it was told, my second questioner had sunk back on the bench, and relapsed into the stupor from which he had, for a moment, been roused.

A few hours later, and I was in the presence of the police magistrate, and undergoing his severe scrutiny, while Tom Smithers, who described himself as a groom then out of place, and who had been permitted by favour of his friend, the ostler, to sleep in the stable loft for a few nights, repented his story with unblushing effrontery.

Nothing, apparently, could be clearer and more to the point. There was he—my accuser—a man who, whatever might be his character, had been in respectable service (and, indeed, he now looked respectable, for he had exchanged his dirty garments for others more suitable for the occasion), and was likely to have some remains of his wages to take



care of; and there was I, a ragged, homeless vagrant, who could only reiterate the unlikely tale that, in laying my hand on the concealed treasure, I had only reclaimed my own.

"A pretty story, this!" said the justice, shaking his head; "but you can scarcely expect it to be believed. Pray what other account can you give of yourself?"

"Ben knows," said I, looking imploringly towards the ostler, who had just given evidence against me, rather sorrowfully, I thought, "that I never done any thing bad."

Thus appealed to, Ben willingly gave the benefit of his testimony, such as it was, that I had always been looked upon as an honest lad, and that he had never had any reason *till now* to alter his opinion.

"That doesn't go for much," said the magistrate. "Have you anything else to say, prisoner?"

Yes, I had something else to say. The little bag of money lay near me, and that bag—it was made of a peculiar pattern of printed linen, very dirty new, but the pattern was visible—I remembered how I became possessed of that bag.

"If Bill Jackson was here," I said eagerly, "he would tell how he gave me that bag more than a year ago."

"Then why isn't Bill Jackson here?" demanded the justice, angrily. "And who is Bill Jackson?"

I could tell, by the old ostler Ben's countenance, that I had committed a blunder, and I soon discovered that I had irretrievably damaged my case. "Who is Bill Jackson?" repeated the justice, impatiently.

"A helper in the stables," I answered.

"Then why isn't he here, I want to know?" interposed the irritable magistrate. "Send for him."

"Your worship will have to send a long way," said one of the officials of the court, with a broad grin. "Bill Jackson was had up at Newgate and transported, more than two months ago, for——"

"Oh, ho! a pretty witness you have called, prisoner," said the magistrate. "I reckon that it is fortunate for you that Bill Jackson is not here. Perhaps you have more witnesses to call who will swear to your innocence?"

There was a man in Covent-Garden market, I said, who would speak a good word for me if he were present.

"Well, who is he? and what could he prove?"

"I don't know his name," said I; "but——" It is strange, but true, that often as the friendly gardener had employed me, I had never asked or heard his name.

"A pretty piece of business this!" said the magistrate. "You are charged with stealing a bag of money, young man, and you tell us that it is your own. You call witnesses to prove it, and one of them is a man without a name, and the other you must have known is a convict."

I did not know it, I replied eagerly. I had been weeks and weeks in the hospital, and only got out yesterday.

"And the first use you make of your recovered strength, and the return you make for the kindness you received—if this is true—is that you go back at once to your bad courses. Who are your

friends, and where do they live, prisoner?" he demanded.

"I have no friends," I said, sullenly.

"Where were you brought up, then? Where did you live before you took to this vagrant way of life?" he demanded again.

"At Whiskers' Rents."

"One of the worst places in London, your worship," promptly rejoined the constable, who had once before spoken. And thus, every word I had uttered in my defence, seemed naturally to tell against me. I do not blame the magistrate; but I have often thought, since then, how comparatively easy it is for hardened guilt to put on the look of injured innocence; and for innocence, *for a time*, to wear the aspect of guilt.

"I am afraid that you are an expert young rogue," said the justice; "and if you had happened to have been here before, I should send you to Newgate for trial at the next Sessions; and let me tell you, young man, that you have had a narrow escape. As it is, you may think yourself fortunate to be sentenced to three months imprisonment, with hard labour; and if——"

"It was my money!" I shouted.

"Remove the prisoner," said the magistrate; and I was accordingly removed, while my hard-earned and carefully-hoarded treasure was handed over to the perjured Mr. Thomas Smithers. But Fanny's purse, which he did not claim, was afterwards restored to me, with its contents undiminished. There was comfort in that.

Meanwhile, I was conducted, in the usual form, to prison.

## THE SKETCHER IN MANCHESTER.

### SECOND PAPER.

It would seem doubtful whether there is any town or city in the kingdom, in which more has been done than is done in Manchester towards helping those who are at all disposed to help themselves in the grand pursuit of education and mental progress. People at a distance are apt to think that everybody in the cotton capital is for ever making and getting money, either for himself or others: and they are apt to be surprised when they come to look into the matter, and find that said capital contains four colleges, as many literary institutions, three public schools, nine libraries, of which three are open freely to the public, and no end of literary, scientific, and philosophic societies, readily available to all who will take the pains to fit themselves for association with them. More than that, it is a fact that all these means and materials of progress are more accessible to the Manchester public than to any other public consisting of similar elements—for the simple reason that the industrial classes here quit labour at an earlier hour—the factories closing at six, the warehouses at least as early, and many other branches of trade not much later.

We must notice some of these educational institutions as cursorily as may be. And first on the list, in deference to its claim of antiquity, comes the CHETHAM COLLEGE and LIBRARY. Chetham's Hospital is one of the most ancient buildings in the city; it stands close to the Cathedral, and is approached by a handsome gate-

way, bearing the arms of the founder, Humfrey Chetham. By his will he decreed that the foundation should educate and support forty boys, selected from Manchester and the neighbouring townships; at the present moment it contains double that number, who are clad in a garb resembling that of the Christ's Church children in London. On attaining the age of fourteen they are apprenticed, with a premium and an outfit. As we approach the quaint old building, we are met by one of the boys who acts as cicerone; and while following him towards the library, we catch a glimpse of the antique buttery where the culinary operations are still carried on, and ascend the solid stairs to a gallery of old-fashioned carpentry, massive and gloomy, and divided into stalls, in each of which are the presses crammed with rare old tomes in vellum and pig-skin, which we may read if we like. A curator at a desk is ready to minister to our wants, and beyond him a grim skeleton in a glass-case keeps ghostly guard over the dusty tomes. The boys are busy in school, and the few readers whom the forgotten lore here stored up has brought to the reading-room are still and silent, and we hear nothing but the echo of our own footsteps, as, completing the range of the dim gallery, we retreat once more to the light of day.

The other colleges in Manchester are the **NEW COLLEGE**, situated in Grosvenor Square, which was founded in 1786, and boasts a valuable library; and **OWEN'S COLLEGE**, which occupies a large house; it originated from a munificent bequest by the gentleman whose name it bears.

The **FREE GRAMMAR SCHOOL** is situated in Long Millgate. It was founded by Oldham, Bishop of Exeter, in 1520; at the present time the foundation is wealthy, and the education imparted of first-rate character; in consequence, there is seldom a vacancy to be filled up. The pupils may compete for twelve exhibitions at Oxford or Cambridge.

The **MANCHESTER COMMERCIAL SCHOOLS** are in the Shefford New Road, in a handsome new building erected in 1845 by the Manchester Church Education Society. They are devoted to the education of the middle classes; their general management is under the direction of a committee. The business of instruction is in the hands of well-qualified masters; and there is a library and natural history museum for the use of the pupils. If a scholar become an orphan during the time he is at school, there is a provision for reducing the scale of payment in his favour, in order that he may continue his education.

The **LADIES' JUBILEE SCHOOL**, so called because it was founded in commemoration of the jubilee of George III., is an institution which ought to have its fellow in every city and large town in the realm. It is intended for the reception and instruction of young girls, and fitting them for the efficient performance of the duties of domestic servants. In the prosecution of this important mission, it is eminently successful, and has constantly forty young females in course of training. It is under the management of a committee of ladies and an assistant committee of gentlemen. Its prosperity is mainly due to the bequest of £10,000 by Mrs. Francis Hall, in 1832.

Of the learned societies in Manchester, our limits will allow but small notice. The chief among them are the following: The **LITERARY** and **PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**, meeting in George Street, of which Dr. Dalton was a member, and which yet preserves his laboratory and apparatus in the condition in which he left them. The Transactions of this society are periodically published, and the records since its foundation in 1781 fill several bulky volumes. The **CHEETHAM SOCIETY** has for its object the editing and publication of historical and literary remains connected with the counties palatine of Lancashire and Cheshire, and the printing of scarce works and manuscripts. The society was formed in 1843, and has published already nearly thirty volumes. The **STATISTICAL SOCIETY** was established in 1834, with a view to the collection of facts illustrating the condition of society, and the discussion of subjects of social and political economy, to the exclusion of party politics. They have put forth various interesting papers on the condition of the working classes. The **GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY** meets at the Royal Institution; its object is to collect information bearing on geological science, and to augment the aggregate of general knowledge by its diffusion. In addition to the above learned societies, Manchester boasts many others of an analogous kind. There is also a Law Association, a Medical Society, several musical societies, and associations for mutual support and for the protection of trade.

The **Manchester MECHANICS' INSTITUTION** claims particular notice, since it was in Manchester that the first experiment of an institution of this kind was tried. The attempt was first made so far back as the year 1825, under the auspices of Sir Benjamin Heywood, Bart., and two rooms in a house in Cross Street were the scene of operations. Two years afterwards a building was erected, better fitted for carrying out the design of the founders, in Cooper Street. The institution thrived well, and from a small beginning grew a great fact. It has proved for more than a quarter of a century extensively useful as a means of popular education, and has probably contributed more than any society that could be named to the intellectual advancement of that class who are the nerve and sinew of manufacturing enterprise. At length the building in Cooper Street, though it will accommodate a thousand members, is grown too small for its functions, and a new one has been erected in David Street, Portland Street, fully adequate to all the requirements of the institution. Since our visit to Manchester, this new building has been opened with an exhibition of arts and manufactures, and a new era has been inaugurated, with the prospect of permanent and substantial prosperity. The institution at present enrolls 1600 members, of whom 900 are in regular attendance at the day and evening classes, and it possesses a library of 16,000 volumes, circulating at the rate of 55,000 per annum.

Let us glance now at the **LIBRARIES**, which, to our notion, afford the surest index of the state of mental activity in a community. Besides the Chetham Library, already alluded to, which contains above 20,000 volumes, many of them most

rare and valuable, and which was for a long time the only free library in England, Manchester has now two other free libraries, both of them institutions of a superior class, and real benefactions to the people. One is the library in Camp-field, in the building erected by the Socialists, and formerly known as the Hall of Science; the place is well adapted for the purpose of a library, and we find it much prized and frequented by the people. The reading-rooms are two, not much smaller in area than those of the British Museum, and stocked with books of the utmost value for practical purposes, together with rare and costly editions of old British authors. In the lower room are the local and provincial papers and the lighter periodicals, for the most part in the hands of persons who would not see them at all if they did not see them gratuitously; and in the room above are more serious students at work on more substantial stuff. The arrangements are everything that could be desired—the library being not merely free, but, to a large extent, circulating gratuitously. The other free library is situated in the refreshment-house in Peel Park, in the borough of Salford. It owes its origin to the late J. Brotherton, Esq., M.P., and the exertions of a number of gentlemen who combined for the purpose of carrying out the undertaking. The library was opened in January, 1850; it already contains many thousand volumes, and has succeeded beyond expectation. It has reading-rooms and news-rooms, and a well-stocked museum on the upper floor, adorned with pictures by Manchester artists and portraits of eminent men. Peel Park and its library appear to us to combine two things which it is extremely desirable to have together—the means of relaxation and of improvement. The Park, although situated in smoky Manchester, or rather on its extreme skirt, is really the most delightful and picturesque tract of land to which we can point as public property. It forms the precipitous ridge of a hill well-wooded, and stretching along the banks of the Irwell; while the soil down to the water's edge is well preserved and tastefully laid out in walks, and commands pleasant views from various points. We can imagine no more agreeable way of spending a short holiday than by a stroll in such a spot, supplemented by an hour or two in the reading-room, or among the wonders and curiosities of the museum.

The libraries not free in Manchester are much more numerous. Among them are a Foreign Library and a Law Library, and several subscription libraries, most of which are the property of the shareholders.

We come now to the PLACES OF WORSHIP. These number, we believe, no less than one hundred and sixty in all, including fifty Protestant churches, ten belonging to the Roman Catholics, and a hundred at least of dissenting chapels and meeting-houses. This, at first sight, seems a large amount of accommodation for religious purposes; but, supposing that half the population of Manchester attended divine service, it would require that each place of worship should hold 1250 persons, which far exceeds, if it do not double, their average capacity. Our limits of course preclude us from noticing more than a few of these edifices, and we shall confine our remarks to such

as are interesting from considerations of antiquity or art.

The CATHEDRAL, or MANCHESTER OLD CHURCH, was built in the year 1422. It is in the perpendicular style of Gothic architecture, and is accounted a very fine specimen, but has suffered considerably owing to the porous nature of the stone. The tower is 120 feet high, and is much ornamented towards the summit, but it is evidently going fast to decay. On entering the nave, the view obtained from the middle aisle is very striking, and the more impressive from the fact that the eye does not readily take in the limits of the building, owing to the artistic disposition of the clustered columns and pointed arches on either side. The roof is nearly flat, and is divided by the supporting beams and mouldings into small compartments; the intersections are curiously carved, and the compartments are delicately tinted and pointed with crimson and gold. A florid yet chastened style of ornament prevails throughout the nave, the effect of which is somewhat marred by the wood-work of the pews. An object well worthy of remark is the carved stone font with its cover, opposite the entrance to the church. This font is a modern imitation of the medieval style of art, and is rightly regarded as a masterpiece, being designed and carved with unusual skill, and inscribed with appropriate texts of Scripture. It was erected in 1847 as a memorial of two of the descendants of Humfrey Chetham.

On passing into the choir, through the screen which separates it from the nave, the aspect of the interior very materially changes. The stalls of the deans and canons on each side present us with a series of the most complex, highly-finished, and grotesque carvings ever produced, and all in a state of such exquisite colour and preservation as to challenge comparison. The roof of the choir is richly ornamented, and the decorations throughout, while consistent in character, are in lavish profusion. The choral service is performed twice daily, at eleven in the morning and half-past three in the afternoon. The chapels, of which those adjoining the nave have been thrown into the body of the church, present some noteworthy features. Thus, in that of St. Nicholas, built in 1490, there is a small painted window brought from Belgium, representing one Nicholas Brounget and his wife kneeling and returning thanks for the cure of their two children, who are represented behind them in a tub. In the Derby chapel, built in 1513, lies buried Sir James Stanley, brother to that Earl of Derby who married the mother of Henry VII. He was buried in this chapel because he incurred by his follies excommunication from the Pope of Rome, and his remains were not allowed to be carried into the church. There are the relics of some curious painted windows in various parts of the church, as well as many ancient monuments and effigies, worthy of note.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, standing in St. John's Street, Deansgate, is a Gothic-looking structure, something less than a century old. With little remarkable in its exterior, it will repay a visit within. There are three stained-glass windows, one of them of some pretensions, representing the entrance of Christ into Jerusalem. The chief attraction, however, is a fine monument by Flax-

man, comprising ten figures in marble, and representing a group of children receiving instruction from an aged minister. There is also an elaborate monument, in the shape of a shrine in three compartments, to the memory of William Marsden, who presided over the committee which obtained for Manchester in 1843 the Saturday half-holiday. He died in 1848, at the age of twenty-eight years. The inscription states that the monument is raised as a tribute to his private worth by those who were benefited by his efforts. It is executed in Caen stone, and contains in all no fewer than sixteen figures in relief.

The remaining churches are of a more modern date, and fully one half of them appear to have been built since the beginning of the present century. Some are handsome structures, and some are as plain and dingy in their exteriors as they can well be. The oldest church in Salford is Trinity Church, which was built in 1634, but had to be pulled down in great part about a century later, in consequence of the addition of a peal of bells whose vibration shattered the fabric. The tower is in the Gothic perpendicular style, and resembles that of the cathedral; and the interior of the church wears an old-world look. Among the churches built during late years are several stately and imposing edifices.

Among the one hundred buildings used as places of worship by the Dissenters of Manchester, there is an extensive variety of style and pretension, which it would be extremely difficult to describe. Some of the later erections differ very little outwardly from episcopal churches. Such, for instance, is Cavendish Street Chapel, Chorlton, which, with its Gothic outline, its square tower and spire rising 170 feet, might pass for a parish church.

In the hasty survey we have taken, in this and the preceding paper, of the public buildings and institutions of Manchester, we have noted little more than what will be found lying patent to the observation of any stranger. Without doubt we have omitted much that might have been advantageously said; and in so doing may have done scant justice to the subjects of our neglect. But we have said enough to show that the people of Manchester are in earnest in providing not only for their commercial necessities, but for their educational wants, their intellectual progress, their recreations, their charities, and their religious instruction. What is the action of all this machinery upon the popular mind and habits, and how far it acts at all, we shall have some opportunity of judging in future papers.

#### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF THE INDIAN MAIL.

THE steamer, with the mails and passengers from Southampton and Malta, has just been announced by the Pasha's telegraph: from the latter port she also conveys those *via* Marseilles; and the result of the said announcement is the early assemblage in the great square of all the mercantile residents at Alexandria.

If you have any doubts as to the identity of the vessel—a nay suspicion that the smoke, now dimly

visible on the horizon, proceeds from other than the Southampton boat—go to the square; the state of excitement and preparation which prevails there will supply ample proof of the reality and importance of the event. By the best clock in Alexandria, the hour is barely half-past seven A.M.; business men rarely make their appearance before nine; but now, the place presents a scene of unusual bustle and confusion. Merchants, who have speculated largely in grain or cotton, look pale and flurried as they hurry to and fro: accounts *via* Trieste have been alarming, and they hope for a refutation of their fears by the present mail. Ship-brokers, who have hesitated clinching charter parties up to the eleventh hour (trusting to a rise or fall in their favour), now hasten on board their respective vessels, and, much to the astonishment of half-awake skippers, make apparently rash sacrifices as regards pending differences of freights.

But, apart from these circumstances, if it were not for the arrival of the mail boat, I should like to know why the donkey boys have turned so independent all of a sudden. Why, in lieu of tormenting you into a ride, they absolutely refuse extravagant fares—mounting their own asses, and trotting away to the most frequented wharves, with all the nonchalance of millionaires! What reason can you adduce for all the old hack carriages brightening up like an old hat in a shower of rain? Why is there such a splashing of water and sweeping of brooms in all the hotels and refreshment houses? Wherefore do the two fabulously rich innkeepers sally forth in unexceptionable linen and swallow-tailed cutaways, when their usual costume consists of shirt-sleeves and straw-hats? I ask, why do these wealthy and corpulent denizens absolutely rush into their respective vehicles, and get wheeled away to the sea-shore? Perhaps, too, you can show cause why the sedate old Turk (so slow and cautious in his movements, and with so decided a predilection for snails instead of steam) absolutely trots across the square, at the risk of degradation in the eyes of bearded neighbours, unless it be because he has the keys of her Majesty's post-office?

Supposing you still to remain obstinately incredulous, we ask further, Wherefore are all the geese, turkeys, pigeons, fowls, rabbits, vegetables, fruit, nay, even the very bread on the bakers' stalls, suddenly bought up and whipped away—much to the discomfort of regular market-going customers, who on such occasions are reduced to a light diet of salted olives or dried figs? Finally, for what purpose does the crazy old letter-cart, with its famine-stricken horses (the acknowledged property of her Majesty's post-office in Egypt), with a post-office clerk in one corner and a post-office porter in another, dash through the square on its way down to the Marina; threatening, as it goes, the destruction of sundry loquacious old gentlemen, who will persist in holding arguments in the most frequented thoroughfares?

These are all indubitable proofs that the English mail boat is in sight; and, as a conclusive proof, the British Consul has hoisted his flag, and the vessel's numbers are deciphered as follows:—"THE INDUS FROM SOUTHAMPTON, WITH 127 PASSENGERS FOR INDIA."





SCENE AT THE ALEXANDRIAN POST-OFFICE AFTER THE ARRIVAL OF THE RAIL.

Such is the announcement placarded at the principal post-offices and the merchants' exchange-rooms. We hurry down to what is called the transit wharf; and here, amidst some scores of donkeys, boatmen, camels, and vehicles of every available description, we catch sight of honest Mustapha, our boatman in ordinary; but who, on the present occasion, spurns the proffered fee, so that we are compelled to relinquish all attempts at boarding the steamer. Seated, therefore, on two prodigious cotton bales, a little apart from the dust and turmoil of wrangling boatmen, we watch proceedings. The last puff is at length blown out of the funnel of the huge steamer, and her sides begin to disgorge a living torrent.

But, before the passengers have left the steamer's sides, the boats belonging to the various vessels in harbour have deposited the skippers at the doors of their respective ship-chandlers; whence, after a few minutes' delay, they sally forth in parties of six or seven; and so, scrambling into the saddles of the donkeys (pre-engaged for the period of the vessel's stay in port) post off towards the square at a marvellous pace; but, not being expert cavaliers, they encounter sundry mishaps by the way. The streets are slippery and narrow, besides being full of projecting angles. Cocks and hens cackle and scream, as they fly over ruinous walls for security; while small, unwashed Egyptians, sporting by the paternal threshold, gather themselves into corners—mere living heaps of rags and dust. And so, amidst the hooting of

donkey boys, the braying of donkeys, the uproarious mirth of riders, and the screams and frightened epithets of timid old ladies, who fly as though charged by heavy dragoons, our naval squad are finally deposited in the square. These are scenes always attendant upon the arrival of the English mail.

Apart from the anxiety of sturdy skippers, expectant of fierce letters from shipowners, whose greatest enemy, the gout, has resulted from years of ease and luxury—apart from this, many, if not all, have a wife, a sister, a mother, or some fond-hearted friend, whose few words of remembrance and esteem (sealed and carried across the mighty ocean) are drops of oily balm to soothe the too-often ruffled and troubled current of a sailor's life. Then, again, there are mates, apprentices, cooks, to say nothing of gruff-voiced, unshaven, canvas-clad old tars, each of whom has a secret spring, which, once touched, vibrates the tenderest chords of love and sympathy. Rely upon it, the key to that spring is now anxiously expected. It may be that the envelope is a soiled one, perhaps dirty and torn into the bargain; it may be that the grammar is not according to the rules of Lindley Murray; that the writing is slovenly and bad, and the spelling worse than the conception. Such matters are more than probabilities; yet, for all this, not the finest calligraphy, penned on scented satin-wove by the fairest lady in Britain, ever possessed more intrinsic value for eyes or heart than do the half-dozen lines of poor Molly (in Brig

Place, near the Docks) in the estimation of her hard-worked, privation-enduring sailor husband, when (with the literary assistance of the black cook and the oldest apprentice) he finds it contains loved and cherished names, with the happy assurance that no black shadow has fallen upon their humble threshold!

I wonder, at a moderate guess, how much money it would take to cover the expense of all the letters (setting aside parcels and newspapers, and adhering exclusively to the cost of paper, pen, ink, envelopes, and sealing-wax) that are now being landed from the steamer. What a bewildering calculation likewise it would be to reckon the miles that these have to travel, the hands they have to pass through, the post-office clerks and delivery-men employed in their transmission, to say nothing of the hearts they are ultimately destined to cheer or oppress! Many that wrote them have written their last; many who should read them have gone, alas! to their long home.

Such thoughts open up a maze of conjectures and speculations, all of which are put to speedy flight by the appearance of a long caravan of camels, laden with equal-sized mail-boxes, marked "Calcutta," "Madras," "Bombay," and so forth. These are followed by the rickety old cart, piled up with bags of letters and boxes of parcels. Half an hour afterwards the delivery commences.

Long before the windows are thrown open, a vast concourse of people, of all ages, sizes, and costumes, are congregated in the immediate neighbourhood of the post-office, who are mostly occupied in elbowing and squeezing their way to the immediate neighbourhood of said windows. Were it not for the strong iron barrier, I would not change places with the two delivery-clerks—no, not for all the boxes of bullion eastward-bound; and, mind you, that is making what I consider a great sacrifice.

At last the delivery commences; and now look out, if you chance to be troubled with tender feet. Like angry billows of the sea, the expectant multitude oscillate backwards and forwards. Caps, turbans, straw-hats, sticks, canes, cuffs, fists, and voices are all raised simultaneously, mingling with or defying each other—a perfect tornado of dust and perspiration; and the cries of the trampling and the trampled-upon are only hushed upon the first batch of letters being held up to public gaze.

Timid little men, who have sought shelter under the shady hedges of the new Protestant Church, rush forward at this signal, and join in the *mêlée*. Such as have had the nerve and good fortune to get nearest the bars, hold on with the desperation of despair, and loudly implore immediate possession of their letters. They are in danger of being squeezed as flat as pancakes. By this time every voice, that can raise itself to an audible pitch, is screaming and bellowing the name of some expected object; and the singular din and confusion that ensues, from the amalgamation of names of almost every nation under the sun, defies all attempt at description. A dozen voices, in various modulations, are asking for letters addressed to the following commonplace but barely-pronounceable names:—"Signor C—," addressing the post-office clerk, "any letters for Monsieur Cheekengenoff?" "Signor Sevastopolos?" "Herr

Brettz-Donderum?" "Cap'een Föresailboom, schooner 'Tearaway?'" "Howaja Abdul Hok Lat-fullah Effendi?" "Nussereeldeem Bey?" "Misther Rory O'Flannagan (if it's convanient?)" "Screwem and Co., Brokers?" "Mary Blane, at the Consul-General's?" The last speaker, a lively young servant girl, steps forward, and, out of respect to a countrywoman in a foreign land, the post-office clerk tenders Mary's letters before all others.

Now and then heavy-laden clerks, labouring like so many Atlases under "Globes" and other newspapers, issue from the throng, and hurry, as best they can, towards the offices of their several employers. Stiff-collared, near-sighted old gentlemen, who have been polishing their spectacles impatiently, seize upon the welcome packages, and with closed doors devour their contents and digest them as best they can.

By the time that the delivery is over, preparations are going on for forwarding the Indian Mail to Suez: the camels travel but slowly, so these are despatched to the railway station full four hours before the passengers think of leaving. The travellers destined for the further East have but little available time on their hands: usually, however, they contrive to refresh themselves with a visit to the baths in the town, and forthwith exhaust themselves again by fiery contentions with donkey boys. The lions of the place are visited under a broiling hot sun; but the fresh-imported, healthy-looking youngsters (alas! how few of them may be spared to visit home again) gain only fresh colour and buoyancy of spirits from the novelty and excitement of the scene around them, so that, after all, the donkey boys reap a large harvest.

At 4 P.M. light omnibuses and carriages draw up in front of the several hotels, and a few minutes afterwards they are bearing the new arrivals away on their distant journey. May health and peace accompany them! The 127 passengers have at length all taken their departure, and the square sinks back into monotonous solitude.

The interval pending the arrival of the English mail and its return homewards again, is usually a period of unusual slackness in mercantile affairs, and is protracted or otherwise according to the state of the monsoons in the Indian Ocean. Merchants send twenty times a day to the post-office to hear if any telegraph has reached from Suez. At last it arrives; and, simultaneously with the announcement, all the bustle and activity of the place revives. Again hotel-keepers are on the *qui vive*; again merchants are up early, and late to bed. Twenty-four hours usually ensue between the message of the telegraph and the arrival of the Indian mail. The last night is post night, and few ever dream of bed on that occasion. Clerks, with blood-shot eyes and sleepy intellects, who have been copying letters or charter-parties in close stifling offices, smelling rank of tallow candles, rush out joyously into the cold bracing air of morning, as the distant rumbling sound announces the approach of the Indian mail. Dark-looking omnibuses, full of sleepy, sickly occupants, draw up opposite darker-looking hotels, where suddenly all becomes light and animation, as the broad glare from the chandeliers reveals groups

of spectral objects, in long cloaks, with caps drawn over their eyes, congregating round the ready-laid breakfast table.

Two hours later, and daylight steals in through chinks and crevices to cheer the jaded clerks, who have long since returned to their heavy toil. Presently cadaverous strangers totter up and down the square with unmistakable Indian costumes, and broken Indian constitutions. Poor fellows! not a few of them may barely hope to reach a home on this side of the grave. By noon, all the mails have been closed and sent on board; the steam is roaring from the funnel of the steamer; carriages are hurrying down to the beach; and boats are plying lustily between the ship and the shore. Ten minutes afterwards, the anchor is up, and the good ship "Indus" is homeward-bound.

### BLIND MECHANICS.

PART II.—JOHN METCALF, THE BLIND ENGINEER.

LAST SUMMER, a lecture was delivered to a village audience in Norfolk, on the achievements of the blind. Great interest was excited by the subject, which, perhaps, was enhanced by the circumstance that the lecturer himself was almost blind. Among his hearers, there were those who could not make up their minds to believe some of the marvellous details which he related. At the further end of the barn, whispers were occasionally heard from the labourers present, to the following effect: "He arnt going to get that down us to-night, that's sartin." "A blind man never did them things." Should the same feeling of doubt occur to the readers of this paper, or the previous papers on blind travellers, mathematicians, and mechanics, we beg leave to state, that every incident brought forward has been derived from the most reliable authorities. The extraordinary exploits of "Blind Jack," the hero of the following sketch, have been carefully abridged from a memoir, originally published at Liverpool in his lifetime, and the writer has been assured by a venerable friend, who was personally acquainted with him, that the anecdotes given respecting him are currently believed in Yorkshire.

John Metcalf was born at Knaresborough in 1717, and his parents were labouring people. He lost his sight by small-pox, when six years old, in spite of all the efforts made to preserve to him that invaluable blessing. Three years after this melancholy event, he was able to find his way to any part of the town. As his father kept horses, young Jack learned to ride, and soon became a good horseman—a gallop being his favourite pace. He was a stranger to fear; it mattered little to him what horse he mounted, and he almost always managed to keep the right side of the road.

Surprising as it may appear, Metcalf was very fond of hunting, which led to his company being much sought after by the gentlemen of the neighbourhood. The present aspect of Yorkshire is, in many respects, very different from that presented to the eye of the traveller a hundred years ago. It is now intersected by a network of railways. Tall factory chimneys, springing from enormous piles of building, wherein are produced the great staples of England's commerce, and which collect

around them tens of thousands of busy operatives, now characterise every part of its scenery. But in Metcalf's time, the means of locomotion were very scanty; forest and moor occupied considerable districts of the county, and in travelling you required a guide from one town to another.

In the year 1735, Francis Barton, Esq., of Middlethorp, near York, who kept a pack of beagles, was at Harrogate, and liking Metcalf, gave him an invitation to spend the winter at Middlethorp, desiring him to bring his horse. The invitation was gladly accepted, and he went out with Mr. Barton's hounds thrice a week, highly gratified in the enjoyment of his favourite sport. Having completed his visit, and the hunting season being almost over, he proposed to his patron to take a farewell hunt in the forenoon, intending to proceed to Knaresborough in the evening. He accordingly set out with the hounds in the morning, returned with the squire at noon, and in the evening proceeded to York. He had learned to walk and ride very readily through the streets of that city; and as he was passing the George Inn, in Coney Street, Standish the landlord stopped him, calling out, "What haste?" Metcalf told him he was bound for Knaresborough. The landlord replied, that there was a gentleman in the house who wanted a guide to Harrogate; adding, "I know you can do as well as any one." "So I can," said he; "but you must not let him know that I am blind, or he may be afraid to trust me." "I shall manage that," replied Standish. So, going in, he informed the gentleman that he had procured him a safe guide. Pleased at this, the gentleman requested that Metcalf would take some refreshment; to this, for an obvious reason, the landlord objected, and they soon set off, Metcalf taking the lead. As they were turning Onsegate Corner, a voice halloed out, "*Squire Barton's Blind Huntsman!*" but the gentleman not knowing the meaning of the words, they rode briskly up Micklegate, through the Bar, turned the corner to Holgate, and through Poppleton Field on to Hessay Moor, and then over Skip Bridge. At this time the turnpike had not been made between York and Harrogate. The first turnpikes were established on the great north road in 1663, but the system did not become universal for nearly another century.

At the north-west end of Kirk-Hammerton Moor, the road to Knaresborough joined the main one which led to Boroughbridge by a sudden turn to the left: Metcalf cleared that without any difficulty. When they came to Allerton, the stranger asked whose large house that was which appeared on the right; and was immediately informed by his companion. The great trial of his skill, however, was yet to come. On the road were two gates, one opening into a gentleman's park, and the other leading to Knaresborough. Through the latter it was necessary that the travellers should pass. Here Metcalf's want of vision was supplied by another sense. His arrival at the gate was intimated to him by the strong current of air that swept from the one opening in the road to the other, and, thus guided, he readily turned his horse towards the gate leading to Knaresborough. This he found some difficulty in opening, in consequence, as he imagined, of an alter-

ation that had been made in the hanging of it, as he had not been that way for several months. Backing his horse to the gate-heel instead of the head, the gentleman remarked to his guide that his horse was rather awkward, but added that his own mare was good at coming up to a gate. Metcalf taking the hint, cheerfully permitted him to open it, and his blindness was in consequence still undetected.

Passing through Knaresborough, they entered a forest. Having proceeded a little way, the gentleman observed a light, and asked what it was. Metcalf took it for granted that his companion had seen what is called a *Will-o'-the-Wisp*, which frequently appeared in a low and swampy spot near that road; but fearful of betraying himself, he did not ask in what direction the light lay. To divert attention from this object, he asked his companion if he did not see two lights, one to the right and one to the left. The stranger replied that he saw but one to the right. "Well then, Sir," said Metcalf, "that is Harrogate."

Arrived at their journey's end, they stopped at a house, called the "Granby," where Metcalf, being well acquainted with the place, led both the horses into the stable, and then went into the house, where he found his fellow-traveller comfortably seated over a tankard of negus, in which he pledged his guide. Metcalf took it very readily from him the first time, but on attempting it after a second offer, he reached out his hand wide of the object he intended to grasp. Feeling assured that the circumstance would excite remark, he withdrew, leaving the landlord to explain what his companion was yet ignorant of.

"I think, landlord," said the gentleman, "my guide must have drank a great deal of spirits since we came here."

"Why, my dear Sir, do you think so?"

"Well, I judge so from the appearance of his eyes."

"Eyes! why, Sir," rejoined the landlord, do you not know that he is BLIND?"

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean, Sir, that he cannot see."

"BLIND!"

"Yes, Sir; as blind as a stone."

"Well, landlord," said the gentleman, "this is too much; call him in."

Metcalf enters.

"My friend, are you really blind?"

"Yes, Sir; I lost my sight when six years old."

"Had I known that I would not have ventured with you for a hundred pounds."

"And I, Sir," said Metcalf, "would not have lost my way for a thousand."

His services on this occasion were rewarded by a present of two guineas, besides an entertainment at the cost of the gentleman, who looked upon his adventure with Metcalf as the most extraordinary incident he had ever known.

Metcalf was also an expert swimmer. Two men being drowned in the deeps of the river Nidd, he was employed to seek for their bodies, and he succeeded in bringing up one of them.

A friend of his, named Barker, having one day carried two packs of yarn to wash at a river, they were swept away by a sudden swelling of the current, and carried through the arches of the

bridge, which stands on a rock. A little below the spot there was a piece of still water, supposed to be about twenty-one feet in depth; as soon as the yarn came to this place, it sank. Metcalf promised his friend to recover the yarn, but the latter smiled at the supposed absurdity of the attempt. He, however, procured a long cart rope, fixed a hook at one end, and leaving the other to be held by some persons on the high bridge, he descended, and by degrees recovered the whole of the lost property.

We have not forgotten that we proposed to write a sketch of a blind mechanic; but we trust that our readers will agree with us, that we could not with propriety have omitted all notice of the preceding extraordinary adventures in a series of papers devoted to the achievements of the blind. The limitation of our space compels us to pass over other interesting passages in the singular career of John Metcalf. We have not time, for instance, to tell how his musical talents obtained for him, for many years, the principal means of subsistence; how, amid all his wanderings, Blind Jack ever looked to his own fireside as the brightest centre of his earthly bliss: we cannot stay to relate his exploits in the fishmongers' line of business; nor how, as a coach-proprietor, he set up a stage-waggon betwixt York and Knaresborough, being the first on that road, and which, though stone blind, he drove twice a week in summer and once in winter. He took an animated part, as an assistant to a sergeant in the royal forces, in suppressing the rebellion in 1745; here he cut no small figure, being nearly six feet two inches high, and, like his companions, dressed in blue and buff, with a large gold-laced hat. So well pleased was Captain Thornton with his appearance, that he said he would give a hundred guineas for only one eye to stick in the head of his blind champion. Metcalf was always in the field during the different engagements; and he was present also at the celebrated battle of Culloden.

During his Scotch expedition, he had become acquainted with various articles manufactured in that country, and judging that he might dispose of some of them to advantage in England, he furnished himself with a variety of cotton and worsted goods, for which he found a ready sale in his native country. Among a thousand specimens, by a particular mode of marking adopted by him, he knew what each cost.

Let us now turn to another feature in Metcalf's course. Hitherto his attention had been almost wholly directed to private undertakings; we are next, however, to contemplate him as engaged in the prosecution of works of public utility and interest; and it may surprise our readers to be informed that Blind Jack attained considerable reputation as an engineer and road-maker. During his leisure hours, he had studied mensuration in a way peculiar to himself; and when certain of the girth and length of any piece of timber, he was able accurately to reduce its contents to feet and inches. The first piece of road he made was about three miles of the tract between Fearnaby and Minskip, which he completed much sooner than was expected, and to the entire satisfaction of the surveyor and trustees.

The building of a bridge was not long after-



wards advertised to be contracted for, at Borough-bridge; and a number of gentlemen met for that purpose at the Crown Inn. Metcalf attended, with others. The masons varied considerably in their estimates. Ostler, the inspector of the roads, was appointed to survey the work; and Metcalf told him that he wished to undertake it, though he had never done anything of the kind before. On this, the surveyor mentioned Metcalf's proposal to the gentlemen; he was sent for, and on being asked what he knew about a bridge, told them that he could readily describe his plan, if they would take the trouble of writing it down, which they expressed their willingness to do. "The span of the arch," he proceeded, "being 18 feet, makes the semi-circle 27: the arch-stones must be a foot deep, which, if multiplied by 27, will be 486: and the bases will be 72 feet more. This for the arch; it will require good backing; for which purpose there are proper stones in the old Roman wall at Aldborough, which may be brought, if you please to give directions to that effect." The gentlemen were surprised at his readiness, and arranged with him for building the bridge. He had some difficulty about the stones, but, having procured them, he set his men to work, reared the arch in one day, and finished the whole in a very short period.

Soon after, there was a mile and half of turnpike road to be made between Knaresborough Bridge and Harrogate, which Metcalf also agreed for. Going one day over a place covered with grass, he told his men that he thought it different from the ground adjoining, and would have them try for stone or gravel. This they immediately did, and were fortunate enough to find an old causeway, supposed to have been made by the Romans, which afforded many materials suitable for making the road. Between the Forest-lane Head and Knaresborough Bridge there was a bog, in a low piece of ground; to have passed over this would have materially shortened the distance, but the surveyor thought it impossible to make a road over it. Metcalf, however, assured him that he could readily accomplish it. He was told that if he did so, he should be paid for the same length as if he had gone round. He accordingly set about it, and after laying the foundation, covered it with whin (the thorny broom) and ling (the northern name for heath), and thus made that portion of the road as good or better than any other. He received about four hundred pounds for the work, including a small bridge which he had built over a brook called Stanbeck.

Dr. Bew, the intimate friend of Dr. Moysie, the blind lecturer on chemistry, was well acquainted with Metcalf; and we consider his testimony so interesting and valuable, that we introduce the following extract:—"With the assistance only of a long staff, I have several times met this man traversing the road, ascending precipices, exploring valleys, and investigating their several extents, forms, and situations, so as to further his projects in the best manner. The plans which he designs, and the estimates he makes, are done in a method peculiar to himself, and of which he cannot well convey the meaning to others. His abilities, in this respect, are nevertheless so great, that he finds constant employment. Most of the roads over the

Peak in Derbyshire have been altered by his directions, particularly those in the vicinity of Buxton.

"The blind projector of roads could reply to me, when I expressed myself surprised at the accuracy of his discriminations, that 'there was nothing surprising in the matter. You, Sir, can have recourse to your eyesight when you want to see or examine anything; whereas I have only my memory to trust to.' There is one advantage, however, he remarked, which he had over those possessed of sight: 'The readiness with which you view an object at pleasure, prevents the necessity of fixing the ideas in your mind, so that the impressions in general become quickly obliterated. On the contrary, the information I possess, being acquired with greater difficulty, is, on that very account, so firmly fixed on the memory as to be almost indelible.' I afterwards made some inquiries respecting a new road which he was making; and it was really astonishing to hear with what accuracy he described the courses and the nature of the different soils through which it was conducted. Having mentioned to him a boggy piece of ground through which it passed, he observed, that 'that was the only place he had any doubts concerning, and that he was apprehensive the workmen had, contrary to his direction, been too sparing of their materials.'"

It would be too tedious to give the details of all the numerous roads and bridges made by Blind Jack in Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire; we have, however, compiled from his memoir a table, which represents, at the most cursory glance, the wonderful exploits of his engineering skill. It will be seen that Metcalf laid down more than 120 miles of road, and that upwards of £40,000 passed through his hands.

	Miles.	£
Road between Minskip and Fearnshy .	3	..
Bridge at Boroughbridge .	..	..
Road between Knaresborough Bridge and Harrogate, with a small Bridge at Stanbeck .	1½	400
Road between Harrogate and Harewood Bridge .	5½	1200
Road between Chapeltown and Leeds. Bridge lengthened .	1½	400
Road between Skipton and Colne .	4	..
Burnley Road .	2	..
Through Broughton to Martin and over Romell's Moor .	4	1350
Road between Millbridge and Halifax .	4	1200
Road between Wakefield and Chicklingly Beck .	5	
Road between Hag Bridge and Pontefract .	3½	6400
Road between Crofton and Foulby .	1½	
From Black Moor Foot to Marsden, and thence to Standish Foot, etc. .	9	4500
Standish to Thurston Clough, with ten Bridges .	3	300
Dock Lane Head to Ashton-under-Line, and thence to Stockport and Mottram Langdale .	18	4500
Chapel lo Frith and Macclesfield, and Bridge .	8	.
Road between Huddersfield and Wakefield .	10	2500
Bridge at Marsden, and Road .	10	3500
Randal-caldred to Macclesfield, and Bridges .	8	2600

	Miles.	£
Conleton to entering into Staffordshire	6	3500
Whaley and Buxton, with drains, etc.	4	2500
Huddersfield and Sheffield, drains, etc.	2	340
Huddersfield and Halifax, arches, walls, etc.	8	2700
Bury to Blackburn, and Ackrington, and part of road from Knaresborough to Wetherby	..	600

In 1778, Metcalf's road-making engagements were for a while suspended, in consequence of the illness and death of his wife, after thirty-nine years of conjugal felicity, which was never interrupted but by her illness or his occasional absence. He enjoyed the perfect possession of his mental faculties, and delighted in the company of his friends, until April, 1810. On the 27th of that month this extraordinary man finished his course, in the ninety-third year of his age, during eighty-seven of which he was in perpetual darkness; yet the Almighty had endowed him with abilities to undertake and complete an amount of useful work which it falls to the lot of few individuals more favourably circumstanced to accomplish. What a solemn lesson on the improvement of our talents to the utmost limits, does the history of this blind engineer read to us!

### MELTONVALE;

#### OR, REMINISCENCES OF CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

To a reflecting mind, there is always a pleasure in reviewing the scenes of childhood and youth, and in recalling the events and feelings of that usually happy period. Its pleasures and sorrows are deeply impressed upon the memory; and often in the decline of life, when the important and stirring events of mature age have faded from the recollection, or appear only as a dream, some childish incident, long forgotten, will suddenly arise and burst upon the mental vision with a vividness never excited by the circumstances of after years.

In my childhood music was not so generally cultivated as it is now. At the age of five years I had never seen a piano, nor heard any music beyond the wretched singing in our own village church; when, one day, being on a visit at the market town, and playing in a garden alone, I heard notes that elevated me to the most rapturous enjoyment; my whole being was entranced with delight; a new set of feelings, a new life, seemed to spring up within me at once. From whence the sounds proceeded I never thought of ascertaining; but when the inspiring strains were no longer heard, I hastened into the house, telling every one that I had heard the music of the angels in heaven. For many years I have been somewhat of a performer myself; I have listened to delightful harmonies in the social circle, and to the grand tones of the organ rolling in billowy reverberations through the vast old cathedral aisles; but that simple tune on the piano, heard over a garden wall from an open window, and the impression produced by it, are often present when the more finished and brilliantly executed harmonies are past recall.

In a similar manner, although my eye in maturer life has wandered over many a lovely scene of natural beauty, memory still fondly turns to one spot particularly endeared to it by early associations.

In my school days, my happiest hours were spent at the house of a relative in the country. Our village was at some distance from any town, and most beautifully situated. For a considerable space before you approached it, nature had been sparing of ornaments, in order, it would seem, that she might lavish them with greater profusion at Meltonvale. Inclosed on two sides by gently swelling hills and woods, it was on the south open to a vast extent of country. At a distance of fourteen miles, the venerable minster of the county town was clearly seen amongst the trees. My uncle's house stood a little back from the road, in a garden of considerable extent, and abounding in the richest profusion of beauty. Such quantities of flowers it has never since been my delight to witness. The hedges were nearly formed of white roses, while the flower-beds contained every variety of tint. The trees at the end of the garden and in the adjoining orchard, were literally bowed down with fruit, and their branches lay extended on the gentle green slope; and frequently did the traveller pause as he passed through the village, to admire the rare beauty and abundance of that garden. Often, too, have I stood by the sun-dial in the middle path, gazing with delight on the wonderful and gorgeously splendid profusion. Upon one side of the house, looking on the full length of the garden, a large honeysuckle climbed, and surrounded nearly every window. When grey twilight was beginning to render all objects dim, how did I delight to sit at my open casement, while the air was heavy with the mingled odours of woodbine, roses, and eglantine; and no sound was heard but the droning flight of the beetle, the low, melancholy scream of the curlew, and the booming hoot of the owl in the grove!

My visits to Meltonvale were generally in the holidays when the days were long, consequently my strongest impression of the beauties of that lovely place are in connection with summer. On the farthest side of the garden, and joining the orchard, was an inclosure, containing many tall old fir trees; this was called the nursery, and was a favourite resort with the young people. Beyond that was a croft, where the yellow iris abounded; this led to a pasture, in the middle of which stood an ancient beech tree, into which we often climbed and sat in the mild moonlight evenings, listening to the various distant rural sounds—the bleating of a lamb, the faint chirp of a bird, the footfall of some labourer returning home, or the hoarse dog that bayed the silvery moon. Frequently, too, at an early hour in the morning, in the clear fresh air, we wandered on the winding road of the village, which contained but few cottages, but they were picturesque, being all thatched, whitewashed, and covered with roses.

Once, when a mere child, I paid a visit to Meltonvale in winter. It was at Christmas; but the season had been exceedingly mild. There had been no frost; and well do I remember the many rambles my cousins and myself took over

the hills and to all the neighbouring hamlets. Fearlessly we went through the woods, mere children as we were, climbed the uplands, found roads for ourselves, crossed fields, clambered over gates and stiles, until the shades of evening gathered round us, and often before we reached home night had closed in; but such was the simplicity of the manners and the habits of the people in that district, that four or five of us were trusted alone to wander as inclination dictated.

My cousins formed a large family of fine children; their blue eyes, clustering golden locks, and happy countenances, delighted me even then, and they have left an ineffaceable impression on my mind. As the family had their employments and sources of pleasure and amusement within themselves, and as these were quite sufficient for their desires, they did not mix much with society, and knew but little of town life; consequently there was freedom from the conventionalities that check the natural impulses of joy in youth. One mild, dry, but cloudy day, four of us, between the ages of seven and eleven, set off on a little excursion. Our path lay through fields and woods, and we passed two or three sequestered nooks hid amongst the valleys and groves. In one straggling hamlet we entered a cottage to rest, and listened to marvellous traditional stories respecting the adjoining wood, which was very extensive, and covered two opposite hills, with a gloomy ravine between. Our minds were deeply impressed by these wild narratives; and hastily rising and leaving this place, we climbed an adjoining hill, from whence there was an extensive prospect; but in vain we looked for the neighbouring cathedral, the grey mists of the horizon preventing its appearance. There we stood in silence as the gloomy breeze swept by us, and the solemn shadows of night began to fall, feeling more than we understood, and the poetry of nature producing deep impressions on our minds.

The last time I visited Meltonvale was in autumn, and then I did indeed revel in all the wild loveliness of sylvan scenery. We took several long rambles; one of which I particularly remember. It was a glorious day, although late in the season; the hare sported at our feet, and the squirrel leaped amongst the branches. The dancing shadows of the leaves on our path, the golden sunshine pouring on the opening glade, the changing hues of the foliage, the whirling fall of crimson leaves, the fitting butterflies, the deep blue sky, and the gorgeously-piled fleecy clouds, formed altogether a picture of rich and luxuriant beauty. Then how pleasant it was to return to our beautiful home, as the autumn moon arose, softly silvers the quiet groves, and imparted a fresh purity to the white roses in the garden hedge. I still retain a lively impression of that delightful season. But where is that family now? My cousins and their parents crossed the ocean, and settled in a foreign land. Several of them are themselves near the vast forests of the new world. I never hear anything of them now; but in the wild and rugged scenery surrounding their dwellings, perhaps, like me, they sometimes recall the memories of their happy youth in the delightful seclusion of Meltonvale.

And now I can hardly believe that what has been here described formed part of my own life. It seems as a dream when one awaketh, or like a vision, dispelled as a mist before the rising sun. Beautiful scenes, kind and happy faces of friends, inspiring hopes, enjoyment unmarred by sad reflections on the past or fearful anticipations for the future, the absence of even a fear of sorrow or bereavement, a felicity heightened by the joyous buoyancy of youthful spirits—all these things now exist only in memory, and their full freshness can be but rarely recalled. How widely different has been my experience of life since that period! Time, in its progress, has brought a series of unlooked-for trials, and presented a picture of continued difficulties, disappointments, and death. My friends have dropped off like leaves in autumn.

"Where are they, with whom in youth I started,  
The loved companions of my early days?  
They are gone, estranged from me, or parted;  
Torn from my fond embrace a thousand ways."

But the period is not far distant when these long-endured trials will appear as shadowy and evanescent as the bright scenes of youth. Eternity dawns, the shadows are fleeing away, and all earthly joys and earthly sorrows will disappear upon us. Then every event will appear unimportant, except in its influence on our destiny in eternity. "For these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall"—to the true believer in Christ—"work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

#### THE POWER OF A SMILE.

It is related in the life of a celebrated mathematician, William Hutton, that a respectable-looking countrywoman called upon him one day, anxious to speak with him. She told him, with an air of secrecy, that her husband behaved unkindly to her, and sought other company, frequently passing his evenings from home, which made her feel extremely unhappy; and knowing Mr. Hutton to be a wise man, she thought he might be able to tell her how she should manage to cure her husband. The case was a common one, and he thought he could prescribe for it without losing his reputation as a conjuror. "The remedy is a simple one," said he, "but I have never known it to fail. *Always treat your husband with a smile.*" The woman expressed her thanks, dropped a curtsy, and went away. A few months afterwards she waited on Mr. Hutton with a couple of fine fowls, which she begged him to accept. She told him, while a tear of joy and gratitude glistened in her eye, that she had followed his advice, and her husband was cured. He no longer sought the company of others, but treated her with constant love and kindness.

#### IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.

ARE you a Christian? If not, do you ever expect to be? If so, when? If God should soon call you to your account, what reason could you give for being *impenitent*? Might you not be a Christian now? Delay not, then, now to seek salvation, lest you should put off too long, or at last seek too late. Receive these questions kindly from one who may never meet you till the day of judgment. *Think of them; think seriously; think prayerfully; think now.*

## Varieties.

**MEDICAL MEN AND WOMEN IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY.**—The clergy and the Jews were the leading men of the medical profession during the tenth and eleventh centuries. From 1131 down to 1163 the Popes took occasion to thunder against practising ecclesiastics. A chief-justice, about the year 1223, recommended to the Bishop of Chichester one Master Thomas, an army surgeon, as one who knew how to cure wounds, a science particularly needed in the siege of castles. Barbers assisted in baths, shaved, and applied ointments. Henry v., at Agincourt, with 30,000 men, had one surgeon and fifteen assistants. During the reign of Henry VIII, there were twelve surgeons in London. In 1512 physicians and surgeons had to be approved of by the Bishop of London or the Dean of St. Paul's. Females were everywhere to be met with practising the healing art. The tooth-drawer's, now the dentist's art, is not of recent date. Sir John Blagrave, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, had all his teeth drawn, and afterwards had a set of ivory teeth in again.—*Social History of the Southern Counties.*

**THE "MYSTERY" OF TAMING BIRDS.**—Some masters and mistresses can never "tame" birds—never get them to be on terms of intimacy. The cause is evident. There are no feelings of affection in common between them. They do not love their birds. The latter know as much; and are assuredly aware that they are kept simply for the sake of furnishing amusement. We have noted the same unerring sagacity with all our pets—our squirrels in particular. They would instantly detect any person who might be preparing, or wishing to play them off some practical joke; and would, to our great delight, fasten on them at once—paying handsomely, and in full, for all favours "about to be" received. It was, however, impossible for us to anger them. They too well knew the friendliness of our disposition—seeing what merry romps and gambols we had together, both by day and night; upstairs, down-stairs, and in the garden. No doubt it is a wise provision of Nature thus to endow our little friends with instinctive powers of perception. The face is the index of the mind. They read our character when they catch our eye.—*Kidd's "Treatise on the Garden Warbler," etc.*

**A LAPLAND CHURCH.**—The building was large, and provided with galleries; nearly every seat was occupied. A motley assemblage was there. Norwegian bonders, in their grey wadmal suits, sat on the south side of the church; on the north their wives and daughters, with the never-absent black silk cap "lue," fastened under the chin, woollen dresses, fitting closely up to the throat, and a kerchief of some bright silk passed twice round the neck, and tied in a large knot behind the ears. Such are the spring, summer, autumn, and winter fashions of the people. Lower down the aisle, and up in the galleries, were the diminutive Laps, dressed in their summer suit—a dingy flannel blouse, ornamented with edgings and shoulder-straps of red and yellow. From their leathern belts depended large knives. Fin women, too, were not wanting, conspicuous by their caps like truncated cones, adorned with gold and silver lace and bright coloured ribands. These tiny people contrasted strangely with the bulkier Norwegians. Here were the blue eyes and fair hair of the descendants of the Vikings, with countenances solemn and sedate. There the gleaming, deep-set orbs, high cheek bones, elf locks, and scanty beards of the inferior race. Some of these intently watched the service with a look of mingled curiosity and fanaticism; while others stared around so wildly and fiercely, that one might fancy they would draw their long knives and set up a wild war-whoop.—*The Oxonian in Norway.*

**RARE FLIES IN THE COUNTY OF BANFF.**—A rare species of flies have just been discovered in Banff. They belong to a class of insects popularly known as sun-flies, from the fact that the female possesses posteriorly an instrument by which she perforates or rather saws holes in trees, into which she drops her eggs. From this it will be seen that the larvae are woodfeeders. In this country they are by no means numerous, and it is well that they are not, or our forests would shortly disappear, for in places

where they abound—such as in Norway—they will destroy hundreds of thousands of trees in a season. It is only the growing and not the dead wood that they attack. The young grubs as soon as they emerge from the egg, cut their way right into the heart of the solid timber, and then gnaw and bore away in every possible and conceivable direction. By this means the tree is either killed or so injured, that ultimately it pines and dies. The fly itself has no English name, but it is known to entomologists by the term of *Sirex Juvenus*. It is a very rare species with us. They were found in a piece of a fir tree which was being cut up for firewood.

**IGNOBLE MODE OF HUNTING THE ELEPHANT.**—In the Somali country, as amongst the Kaffirs, after murdering a man or a boy, the death of an elephant is considered the act of heroism: most tribes wear for it the hair-feather and the ivory bracelet. Some hunters, like the Bushmen of the Cape, kill the Titan of the forests with barbed darts carrying Waba-poison. The general way of hunting resembles that of the Abyssinian Agegeers described by Bruce. One man mounts a white pony, and, galloping before the elephant, induces him, as he readily does—firearms being unknown—to charge and "chivy." The rider directs his course along, and close to, some bush, where a comrade is concealed; and the latter, as the animal passes at speed, cuts the back sinew of the hind leg, where, in the human subject, the tendon Achilles would be, with a sharp, broad, and heavy knife. This wound at first occasions little inconvenience; presently the elephant, fancying, it is supposed, that a thorn has stuck in his foot, stamps violently, and rubs the scratch till the sinew is fairly divided. The animal, thus disabled, is left to perish wretchedly of hunger and thirst; the tail, as amongst the Kaffirs, is cut off to serve as a trophy, and the ivories are removed when loosened by decomposition.—*Burton's "First Footsteps in East Africa."*

**THE VELOCITY AND COLOURS OF LIGHTNING.**—The lightning of the first two classes does not last for more than one thousandth part of a second; but a less duration in passing than one millionth part of a second is attributed to the light of electricity of high tension. In comparison with this velocity, the most rapid artificial motion that can be produced appears repose. This has been exemplified by Professor Wheatstone, in a very beautiful experiment. A wheel made to revolve with such celerity as to render its spokes invisible, is seen for an instant with all its spokes distinct, as if at rest, when illuminated by a flash of lightning, because the flash had come and gone before the wheel had time to make a perceptible advance. The colour of lightning is variously orange, white, and blue, verging to violet. Its hue appears to depend on the intensity of electricity and height in the atmosphere. The more electricity there is passing through the air in a given time, the whiter and more dazzling is the light. Violet and blue-coloured lightnings are observed to be discharged from the storm clouds high in the atmosphere, where the air is rarefied and analogous. The electric spark made to pass through the receiver of an air-pump exhibits a blue or violet light in proportion as the vacuum is complete.—*Peterman's "Physical Geography."*

**IRON PAPER.**—We had recently (says the "Liverpool Albion") an opportunity of inspecting a sample of sheet iron prepared by Bessemer's process. It was remarkable for its great tenacity and beautiful finish, but more especially for the thinness to which it had been wrought. Indeed, it had more the appearance of glazed paper than sheet-iron, and suggested the possibility of our some day seeing an iron newspaper.

**THE BOOK POST.**—The number of book packets, exclusive of newspapers, which now pass through the London office, is at the rate of 1,400,000 per annum, being an increase of more than a million, or 273 per cent. on the number in 1854.

**SWALLOWS.**—As a proof of the very valuable services rendered by swallows, it is estimated that one of these birds will destroy, at a low calculation, nine hundred insects per day.